"I chose to become a teacher because..." Exploring the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice amongst Pre-Service Teachers in Ireland

Abstract

This study investigated the suitability of the FIT-Choice scale for use within an Irish Initial Teacher Education setting with a cohort of first year pre-service teachers (n = 143), from across five different subject disciplines. Exploratory factor analyses were conducted to examine participants' motivations for choosing teaching as a career, as well as their perceptions about teaching. The results were found to be consistent with the original FIT-Choice structure. Prior teaching and learning experiences, as well as perceived ability, were found to be the strongest influential factors in participants' decision to become a teacher. These findings further highlight the prominence given to subject-based knowledge in Ireland. The relationships between participants' motivations for becoming a teacher and their satisfaction with career choice were also examined. Choosing teaching as a fallback career was negatively related to satisfaction, whereas a desire to work with children was found to be a significant positive predictor.

Introduction

Many OECD member countries including the USA, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Turkey and the Netherlands, have experienced problems attracting and retaining effective teachers (McKenzie, Santiago, Sliwka, & Hiroyuki, 2005). In the Netherlands for example it is expected that, in the absence of intervention, between 2011 and 2019 circa 3,000 full-time teaching jobs will remain unfilled (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2011, 2012). A recent report suggests that meeting the demand for qualified teachers in the coming years should be a primary concern for all OECD countries (OECD, 2009b). However, in contrast to this, there is strong competition for entry to teacher education programmes in Ireland where "undergraduate primary teacher education programmes attract recruits from the top 15% of academic achievers in the (school) Leaving Certificate examination" (Hyland, 2012, p. 8). Demand for Irish secondary teacher education programmes has also considerably outstripped supply for many years (Heinz, 2013), although application numbers have fallen

slightly since 2011. In contrast to the 'low status' perception of the profession in alternate contexts (Akar, 2012; Aksu, Demir, Daloglu, Yildirim, & Kiraz, 2010; Anthony & Ord, 2008; Richardson & Watt, 2006), the teaching profession in Ireland benefits from high public status (Coolahan, Egan, & Murphy, 2003; Sexton, 2007) with relatively high levels of public trust and satisfaction with the work of teachers as identified by the iReach Market Research report (Teaching Council, 2010). However, adding complexity to the issue of motivation to teach within this context is the imbalance between the supply of and demand for post-primary teachers in Ireland. The percentage of graduates from consecutive programmes of education obtaining full- time permanent employment in the post-primary sector, the majority of whom are employed on contractual hours, amounts to approximately 10% of the graduate population in Ireland (ASTI, 2011). Furthermore, it is estimated that more than half of graduates from post-primary initial teacher education programmes do not find employment in Ireland and those who are successful are subject to entry-level salaries for new entrants to the public service, including a 10% pay cut and a reversion to the first point on the salary scale (Clarke & Killeavy, 2012, p. 131). Given the opposing trends regarding undergraduate teacher recruitment, status and employment in Ireland compared to many other OECD countries, this study aims to examine Irish pre-service teachers' motivations for choosing teaching as a career using the FIT-Choice Scale.

Motivations for becoming a teacher

As noted by Watt & Richardson (2012, p. 125) "teaching motivations matter". As such motivations are inexorably linked to professional satisfaction and a sense of fulfilment, the impetus for research in the field is widely acknowledged. Accordingly, much research has been conducted into motivations for choosing teaching as a career across subject disciplines

and different jurisdictions (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Eren & Tezel, 2010; Jarvis & Woodrow, 2005; Lortie & Clement, 1975; Mori, 1965; Richardson & Watt, 2005; Wang, 2004; Watt & Richardson, 2007, 2008). In an earlier study involving 556 student teachers studying at Michigan State university, Mori (1965, p. 182) concluded that "motivations for becoming a teacher derived from five communities— Economic, Social, Interpersonal, Intellectual, and Ethical". In a meta-analysis that reviewed 44 studies, Brookart and Freeman (1992, p. 46) suggest that "altruistic, service-oriented goals and other intrinsic sources of motivation" are the primary reasons provided for choosing teaching as a career. More recent studies have highlighted a desire to work with children, the potential for intellectual fulfilment, and the opportunity to make a meaningful social contribution as the primary motives for choosing a teaching career (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; McKenzie, et al., 2005; Watt & Richardson, 2012). However, drawing comparisons between these studies and their findings remains difficult as they "lacked an integrative theoretical framework to guide the selection and organisation of influential factors" (Richardson & Watt, 2006, p. 31). In order to address this limitation and provide a valid and reliable framework for investigating motivations for choosing teaching as a career, Watt and Richardson (2007) developed the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) scale.

FIT-Choice Scale

The FIT- Choice scale, designed by Watt & Richardson (2007), provides a theoretical and analytical framework to guide systematic investigation into motivations for choosing teaching as a future career. Developed in response to the absence of a common framework for research in the area and a proliferation of studies on teaching motivations using divergent scales and questionnaires which often failed to provide a platform for comparisons across subsamples and settings (Watt & Richardson, 2012), this scale acts as a coherent framework which draws

together recurrent themes within prior studies in the field and general career choice literature. These themes are grounded and located within an expectancy-value motivational framework (Watt & Richardson, 2007, 2008; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). The scale has been demonstrated to be psychometrically sound in its initial survey of 1653 Australian pre-service teachers and thereafter across a number of diverse settings, such as Turkey, Croatia, Germany, Switzerland and the United States (Watt & Richardson, 2012). In total the Fit-Choice scale comprises 18 first-order latent factors which are broken down into 12 motivation factors (38 items) and 6 perceptions about teaching (20 items) which includes a Satisfaction with Choice subscale (Watt & Richardson, 2007). The motivation constructs include two higher order factors: personal utility values (which includes the first-order latent factors of Job Security, Time for Family, Job Transferability) and social utility values (which includes the first-order latent factors of Shape Future of Children/Adolescents, Enhance Social Equity, Make Social Contribution, and Work with Children/Adolescents). There are also the first-order latent motivation factors of Social Influences, Prior Teaching and Learning Experiences, Ability, and Intrinsic Value. Each first-order motivation factor is represented by three items within the scale (with the exception of the Time for Family factor which is represented by five items). All motivation items in the scale are prefaced with the following statement; 'I chose to become a teacher because...'.

The six constructs on perceptions of teaching and the decision to become a teacher also consist of two higher order factors: task demand (which includes the first-order latent factors of Expertise and Difficulty, both represented through three items each) and task return (which includes the first-order latent factors of Social Status, represented through six items and Salary, represented through two items) The six constructs also include the first-order factors of Social Dissuasion and Satisfaction with Choice, both represented through three items each (Watt & Richardson, 2008).

International Comparisons using the FIT Choice scale

While stereotypes relating to motivation to teach, such as a family-flexible career, highly altruistic motivations and a "fallback" career abound (Watt & Richardson, 2012), the popularity of the FIT-Choice Scale as a common and reliable instrument for data collection has resulted a new wave of research. These comparisons facilitate the collation of empirical research and, for the first time, the analysis of international research studies into motivations to teach and perceptions of teaching across diverse contexts. Using the Fit-Choice Scale, Richardson & Watt (2006) conducted a large scale study across three Australian universities in order to explore, amongst other factors, teaching motivations and perceptions about the profession. The results of this research identified the highest rated motivations for choosing teaching as; perceived teaching abilities, the intrinsic value of teaching, and the desire to make a social contribution, shape the future, and work with children/adolescents. The lowest rated motivation was noted as choosing teaching as a ''fallback'' career, followed by the social influences of others. Subsequently, in an international FIT Choice scale comparison study carried out by Watt et al. (2012) across samples within Australia, the United States, Germany, and Norway, motivations for teaching were noted to hold more similarities than differences. Five common motivations were emergent within the study, namely; intrinsic value, perceived teaching ability, the desire to make a social contribution, to work with children/adolescents, and having had positive prior teaching and learning experiences. Factors deemed to be of minor influence were the personal utility values of job security and time for family, and the desire to enhance social equity, with social influences of friends, family, and co-workers noted to be the least influential motivating factors. A consensus also emerged amongst the samples in this study regarding the perception of teaching as a career

high in task demand. However, divergence of opinion was noted across these countries concerning additional perceptions about teaching.

Insert Figure 1 Here

Methodology

Pre-service teachers' motivations for becoming a teacher and perceptions about teaching were explored using the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) survey. Permission for use of the FIT-Choice survey was granted by the developers of the scale to the authors for the purpose of this study and to assess its validity for use within an Irish context. The original FIT-Choice scale as validated by Watt and Richardson (2007) was employed in this study without any changes to the wording of the questions. As directed by Watt and Richardson (2007, p. 177) all participants "were asked to rate the importance of each influence on their choice of a teaching career on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important).

Sample

The results presented in this paper represent the findings of a study conducted with first year pre-service teachers in a university in the Mid-West region of Ireland. The study university is the largest provider of post-primary teacher education in Ireland providing undergraduate and postgraduate initial teacher education programmes. First year students enrolled on the four year concurrent undergraduate teacher education programmes are the focus of this research. These programmes comprise a B.Sc with a specialism in Physical Education (and either

chemistry, english, gaeilge, geography or maths), B.Sc with a specialism in Biological Science (with either physical or chemistry), B.Tech with a specialism in Construction Studies and Design and Communication Graphics, B. Tech with a specialism in Engineering Technology and Design and Communication Graphics and a B.Sc with a specialism in physics and chemistry. Participants were invited to partake in this study during the second half of a core education lecture on which the entire sample population was registered. It was outlined at this time that participation was voluntary, in no way connected to participants' modules of study and that all data collected would be anonymised and reported at a general level. The survey was then disseminated within the lecture resulting in the data collection at one time point for the cohort involved. Students who did not wish to participate were free to exit the lecture or return the survey without completion at the same time as those participating. 143 (78 male and 65 female) pre-service teachers completed the survey resulting in a response rate of 48.9%. The average age of respondents was 19.7 years (See Table 1).

Insert Table 1 Here

Context

The Irish Education system consists of three levels; primary education, post-primary education and third level education. Respondents to this survey were studying to become post-primary teachers. This education stage comprises two distinct but interconnected "cycles". Students enter post-primary education at the age of 12 or 13 years and immediately are enrolled on the Junior Cycle programme. This programme spans three years and builds on

the education received at primary level. Following the completion of the Junior Cycle, students at the age of 15-17 years enter the Senior Cycle. The Senior Cycle builds on the Junior Cycle and culminates in a summative examination entitled the Leaving Certificate Examination. A strong transdisciplinary emphasis on the summative examination exists at Senior Cycle level (Hyland, 2011) as eligibility for university placement is governed by points attained in a terminal examination at the end of this cycle. Thus, the Leaving Certificate years form a distinctly pressurised time for students and teachers alike. There are currently two pathways available in Ireland for qualification as a post-primary teacher in Ireland. The first follows a concurrent model of teacher education which spans four years. In this programme students engage in discipline and education studies concurrently. The second option offers students who have achieved a level 8 degree in an aligned area of study the opportunity to complete a two year Professional Master of Education which places primary emphasis on educational studies and school placement in recognition of prior learning in the subject discipline. Students enrolled on the former pathway are the focus of this research.

Analyses

Following the analytical approach outlined in Watt and Richardson (2007) and Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus (2012) exploratory factor analyses were conducted using image factoring and oblimin rotation (delta = 0) on both the FIT-Choice motivation and the perceptions about teaching subscales. The basic assumptions around the sampling adequacy and factorability of the data were assessed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was examined and found to be .743, which exceeded the recommended value of .60 or above. Furthermore, the Barlett's Test of Sphericity value was found to be significant ($p < .001$), which supported the factorability of the correlation matrix. Therefore, factor analysis was deemed appropriate. Decisions on the number of factors to retain were

based on the scree plots, factor interpretability and acceptable Cronbach' alpha measures of reliability as reported here within.

In order to assess any potential relationships between the factors identified, especially with respect to participants' satisfaction with their career choice, a Spearman rank order correlation analysis was conducted. All motivational constructs were also added in a stepwise regression analysis to explore their relationship with participants' 'Satisfaction with Choice'. However, only the most significant predictors are discussed here.

Results

Factor analysis of motivation constructs

The 38 items of the FIT-Choice motivation subscales were subjected to a factor analysis using image factoring and oblimin rotation (delta = 0). Echoing the results from Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus' (2012) study, the eigenvalue > 1 guideline indicated a 10-factor solution and the scree-plot indicated a two-factor or eight-factor solution (see Figure 2). Taking into account the factor interpretability, the clarity of the 8-factor 38-item pattern matrix and the acceptable Cronbach's alpha measures of reliability (see Table 4), we decided to use the eight factor solution for our further analysis. This solution explained 62.95% of the variance and converged in 20 iterations.

Insert Figure 2 Here

Table 2 shows the pattern and structure coefficients. Although several items loaded highly (i.e. > .30) on more than one factor, after examining the correlation matrix and checking the internal consistency for each factor using Cronbach's alpha (deleting items one at a time and re-running the analysis) we decided not to remove items. As illustrated in Table 2, the difference between the main factor loadings and any cross-loadings is relatively high (~.2) with primary pattern coefficients ranging from .40 through .94 for items on their respective factors (Mdn = .67).

Insert Table 2 Here

The observed factors were in general consistent with the results presented by Watt and Richardson (2007) and Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus (2012). The first factor consisted of items from two of Watt and Richardson's (2007) original factors, the 'Work with children' factor and the 'Intrinsic career value' factor combined, which for the purposes of this article we named 'Work with Children' following the approach of Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus (2012). The second factor consisted primarily of items from the original factors 'Job Security' and 'Time for Family' which we named 'Pragmatic Utility Value'. The third factor had the least alignment with Watt and Richardson (2007) as it comprised of items from the original factors 'Enhance Social Equity', 'Shape Future Children/Adolescents' and 'Job Transferability'. For the purpose of this article we have named this factor 'Social & Educational Contribution'. The fourth factor consisted of items from the original 'Make Social Contribution' factor, the 'Shape Future Children/Adolescents' factor and remaining item from the 'Enhance Social Equity' factor, which we named 'Altruistic Service'. The fifth factor was identical to the 'Ability' factor. The sixth factor, which we named 'Social &

Family Influences', consisted of items from the original 'Social influences' and 'Time for Family' factors. The seventh factor was identical to the 'Prior Teaching and Learning Experiences' factor and the eighth factor reflected the 'Fallback Career' factor. This eight-factor solution had medium to high Cronbach's alphas for each of the factors, ranging from α = .74 to α = .84 (see Table 4).

Table 4 shows the means, standard deviations and reliabilities for each of these eight factors. The pre-service teachers who participated in this study indicated that the factors Prior Teaching and Learning Experiences (*M* = 5.57, *SD* = 1.64) and Ability (*M* = 5.51, *SD* = 1.21) were the most important motivators for their choice to become teachers. Conversely, the results reveal that Fallback Career (*M* = 3.29, *SD* = 1.79) and Social and Educational Contribution (*M* = 3.87, *SD* = 1.75) were the least important factors in pre-service teachers' choice of career. Other factors that on average scored above five on the 7-point FIT-Choice scale and were deemed to be of above moderate importance to pre-service teachers' career decision included Work with Children (*M* = 5.41, *SD* = 1.35) and Altruistic Service (*M* = 5.04, *SD* = 1.47). The remaining factors, Social and Family Influences (*M* = 4.06, *SD* = 1.78) and Pragmatic Utility Value (*M* = 4.87, *SD* = 1.63), on average scored below five on the scale and appeared to be of below moderate importance to pre-service teachers' choice of career.

Insert Table 4 Here

Factor analysis of perceptions about teaching constructs

The 20 items of the FIT-Choice Perceptions about Teaching subscales were similarly subjected to a factor analysis using image factoring and oblimin rotation (delta = 0). The

eigenvalue > 1 guideline indicated a 5-factor solution which was supported by the scree plot (see Figure 2). This five-factor solution explained 68.9% of the variance and converged in 8 iterations. However, we decided to delete one item (C5) on the basis of significant cross-loadings, low factor loadings and improved reliability values (Cronbach's alpha) for the associated factor after removing this item. A rerun of the factor analysis continued to result in a five-factor solution that explained 70.1% of the variance, again converging in 8 iterations. This final factor structure for the perceptions about teaching constructs, as presented in table 3, closely mirrors that identified by Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus (2012) and has significant parallels with that of Watt and Richardson (2007).

Insert Figure 3 Here

Excluding item C5, which as outlined was removed, the first four factors identified in this analysis (Social Status, Salary, Social Dissuasion, and Satisfaction with Choice) are identical to the factors with the same titles as determined by Watt and Richardson (2007). The fifth factor, Task Demand, consisted of items from two of the original factors, High Demand and Expert Career, as identified by Watt and Richardson (2007).

Table 4 outlines the factors, reliabilities, means and standard deviations of the perceptions about teaching constructs. The two factors Satisfaction with Choice (M = 5.88, SD = 1.44) and Task Demand (M = 5.63, SD = 1.39) were highly rated by participants, whereas Salary (M = 4.06, SD = 1.51) and Social Dissuasion (M = 4.44, SD = 2.04) scored the lowest on average. This suggest that pre-service teachers in this study perceived teaching to be a career in receipt of relatively low salary but had not experienced a very high level of dissuasion

from pursuing a career in teaching. Mean scores for the final factor, Social Status (M = 5.12, SD = 1.49), were relatively high especially when compared to previous studies in other jurisdictions (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2007; Watt, et al., 2012), which would indicate that participants believed teaching has a relatively high status in Irish society.

Insert Table 3 Here

Correlations between subscales

We observed significant relationships between the motivation factors and many of the perception constructs. The strongest negative correlation was witnessed between the Fallback Career factor and Satisfaction with Choice (r = -.544, p < .001, see Table 5). Work with Children, by contrast, had the largest positive correlation with respect to Satisfaction with Choice (r = .384, p < .001). Social and Educational Contribution, as well as Prior Teaching and Learning Experiences were also both positively related to Satisfaction with Choice, whereas Ability demonstrated a medium (Cohen 1988) negative correlation (see Table 5). These correlations provide information on the importance of those motivational factors in explaining participants' satisfaction with their choice of teaching as a future career.

Insert Table 5 Here

All motivational factors were also included in a stepwise regression analysis. The analysis revealed that the three motivation factors of Work with Children, Ability, and Fallback Career significantly predicted Satisfaction with Choice (see Table 6). Ability and Fallback Career both had a negative beta coefficient (β = -.31, p < .001 and β = -.48, p < .001 respectively), with Fallback Career having the largest influence on Satisfaction with Choice (see Table 6). Work with Children was the single factor predictor with a positive beta coefficient (β = .28, p < .001). These results show, in particular, a strong inverse relationship between Fallback Career and Satisfaction with Choice.

Insert Table 6 Here

Discussion

Our study examined the suitability of the FIT-Choice Scale as developed by Watt & Richardson (2007) for use within an Irish Initial Teacher Education context. Our findings are broadly consistent with research conducted by Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus (2012) in a Dutch university-based teacher education setting and with minor modifications reflect the structure of the FIT-Choice scale as presented and validated by other researchers (Eren & Tezel, 2010; Watt & Richardson, 2007). This study identified three general differences in the structure for the motivation constructions. In the first instance, results of the factor analysis conducted combined items from the original factors 'Job Security' and 'Time for Family' to form a new factor which we named 'Pragmatic Utility Value'. Secondly, factors from the original 'Make Social Contribution' factor, the 'Shape Future Children/Adolescents' factor the 'Enhance Social Equity' factor were combined to form what we labelled 'Altruistic

Service'. The third difference concerned the combining of items from the original factors 'Enhance Social Equity', 'Shape Future Children/Adolescents' and 'Job Transferability' which for the purpose of this article we have named 'Social & Educational Contribution'. The inclusion of item B45 from the original 'Job Transferability' factor in this new factor could be explained by the fact that students had just taken a module on Education for Sustainable Development which may have instilled a desire for flexibility in their location of work in order to facilitate the enhancement of social equity, however, further research would be required to corroborate this inference. Mirroring the findings of Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus (2012) for the perceptions about teaching constructs we found very little difference compared to the original structure reported by Watt & Richardson (2007), except the combining of items from both 'Task Difficulty' and 'Task Expertise', which align with the higher order factor 'Task Demand'. Overall, these results are generally consistent with previously published findings which have identified factor structures similar to that of Watt and Richardson (Eren & Tezel, 2010).

While acknowledging that further research within an Irish context across alternative sample populations is required to support the results of this study, our findings suggest that prior teaching and learning experiences, as well as perceived ability are important influential factors in participants' decision to become a teacher. The importance placed on 'Prior Teaching and Learning Experiences' by participants in this study is, to some extent, unique when compared to published findings from other jurisdictions. This is perhaps explained by the traditional dominance of subject-based knowledge in the Irish second-level schooling system (Hyland, 2011). Consequently, post-primary teacher identity in Ireland is heavily influenced by an 'emphasis on subject knowledge' (Devine, Fahie, & McGillicuddy, 2013, p. 86). Therein, our findings suggest that students' prior experiences and ability to succeed in a particular subject discipline while in school was an significant influencing factor in their

decision to pursue a teaching career within that subject area. These findings dovetail with those of the TALIS Study (OECD, 2009a) which highlighted a detrimental focus on subject specific knowledge within the Irish context. This position is further supported by the work of Heinz (Heinz, 2013) who explored Irish pre-service teachers' 'love' for their subject discipline as part of the intrinsic factors that influenced participants' career choice. In that study Heinz (2013) found that intrinsic factors, including participants' 'love' for their subject discipline, had the largest influence on their choice to become teachers. The factors 'Fallback Career' and 'Social and Educational Contribution' received the lowest ratings from participants. This suggests that the Irish pre-service teachers who engaged with this study did not, in general, consider teaching as a fallback career. It also highlights that making a meaningful social and education contribution was not the strongest influential factor in participants' career choice. This aligns with observations made by Sexton (2007, p.94) that there is "a certain reluctance on the part of Irish teachers to recognise that the moral dimension of teaching." The low rating for items under the 'Fallback Career' factor are perhaps explained by the relatively high social status of teaching as a career in Ireland as identified by Sexton (2007) and also confirmed by the finding of this present study. Within the perceptions about teaching constructs, on average the factors that received the highest ratings were 'Satisfaction with Choice', 'Task Demand' and 'Social Status'. Therefore, in general participants were satisfied with their teaching career choice but recognised that it is a challenging profession that requires significant expertise.

A stepwise regression analysis revealed that participants' desire to 'work with children', their perceived 'ability' and their views on teaching as a 'fallback career' were significant predictors of their satisfaction with teaching as career choice (see Table 6). When these three factors (Work with Children, Ability, Fallback Career) were entered in Step 3 the total variance in Satisfaction with Choice explained by the model as a whole was 48.6%, F (3,

139) = 43.377, $p < .001$. A large negative correlation was observed between the factors 'Fallback Career' and 'Satisfaction with Choice' (as shown in Table 5) suggesting that as perhaps expected, students who chose teaching because they were unsure of what career they wanted or as a result of not receiving a place on their first-choice course were significantly less satisfied with teaching as career for them. While, arguably, an a priori conclusion these results further highlight the importance of student-course alignment (Lynch, Seery, & Gordon, 2011). With increased pressures in many jurisdiction to address teacher supply issues there is a real risk that educational policy incentives could overlook the importance of this student-course dynamic. Participants' desire to "Work with Children" had the largest positive correlation with their career choice satisfaction. This reinforces the importance of a desire to work with children/adolescents, and to support their holistic development, for the occupational well-being of teachers and for job satisfaction (Taris, Horn, Schaufeli, & Schreurs, 2004; Van Horn, Taris, Schaufeli, & Schreurs, 2004).

Conclusion

The findings of this study support the use of the FIT-Choice scale within an Irish university context. While further research is required to examine the external validity of these findings across initial teacher education programmes in Ireland, the factor analyses conducted as part of this present study were broadly consistent with the original FIT-Choice structure identified by Watt & Richardson (2007). Although Heinz (2013) did not report having conducted factor analysis as part of her study, our findings are also consistent with the mean values delineated in her paper for the 12 original FIT-Choice motivation factors. The results from this present study highlight the significant influence that participants' prior teaching and learning experiences, as well as their perceived ability, had on their decision to pursue a teaching career. However, it was ones desire to work with children, which was the strongest positive predictor of satisfaction with choice for these first year initial teacher education

students. Their perceived ability in fact demonstrated a medium negative correlation with satisfaction. Therefore, it is important that both future applicants to initial teacher education programmes and education policy makers acknowledge the importance of student-course alignment which transcends current matriculation system measures of student suitability to engage in a pre-service teacher education programme.

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Figure 1

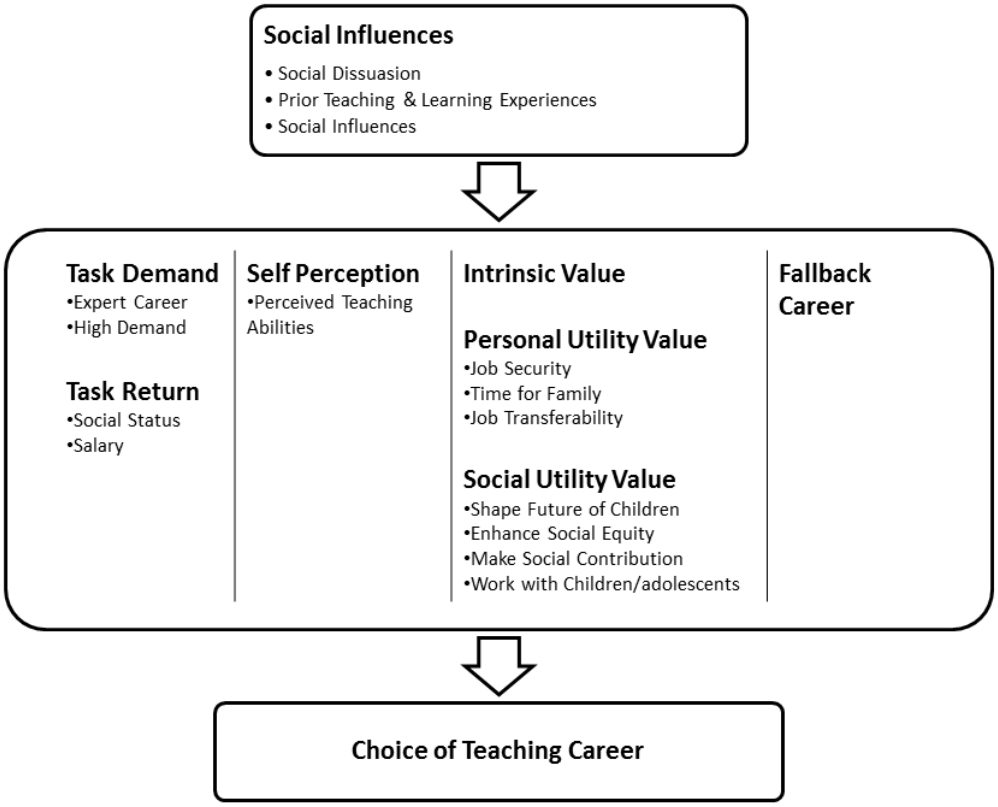

Figure 1: FIT-Choice theoretical model (Watt & Richardson, 2012).

Figure 2

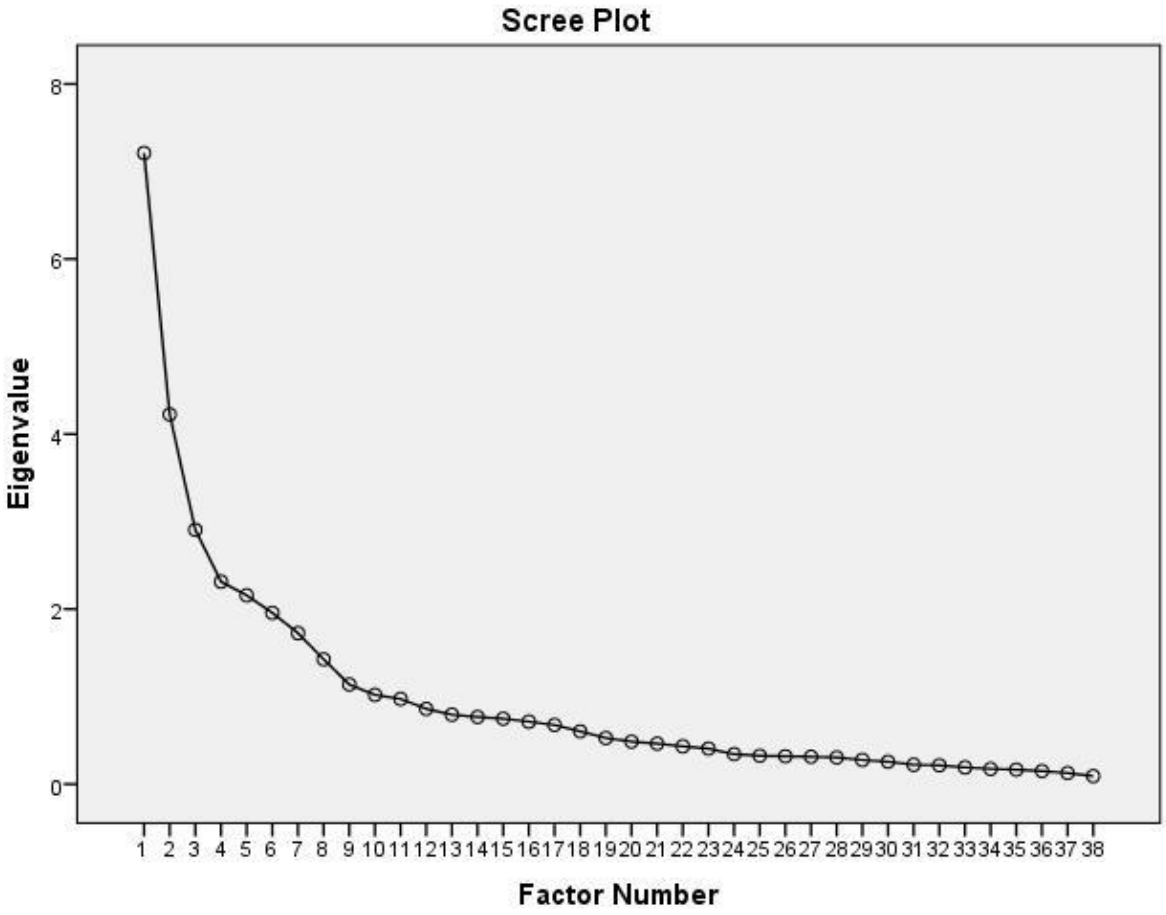

Figure 2: Scree plot of the motivations factor analysis

Figure 3

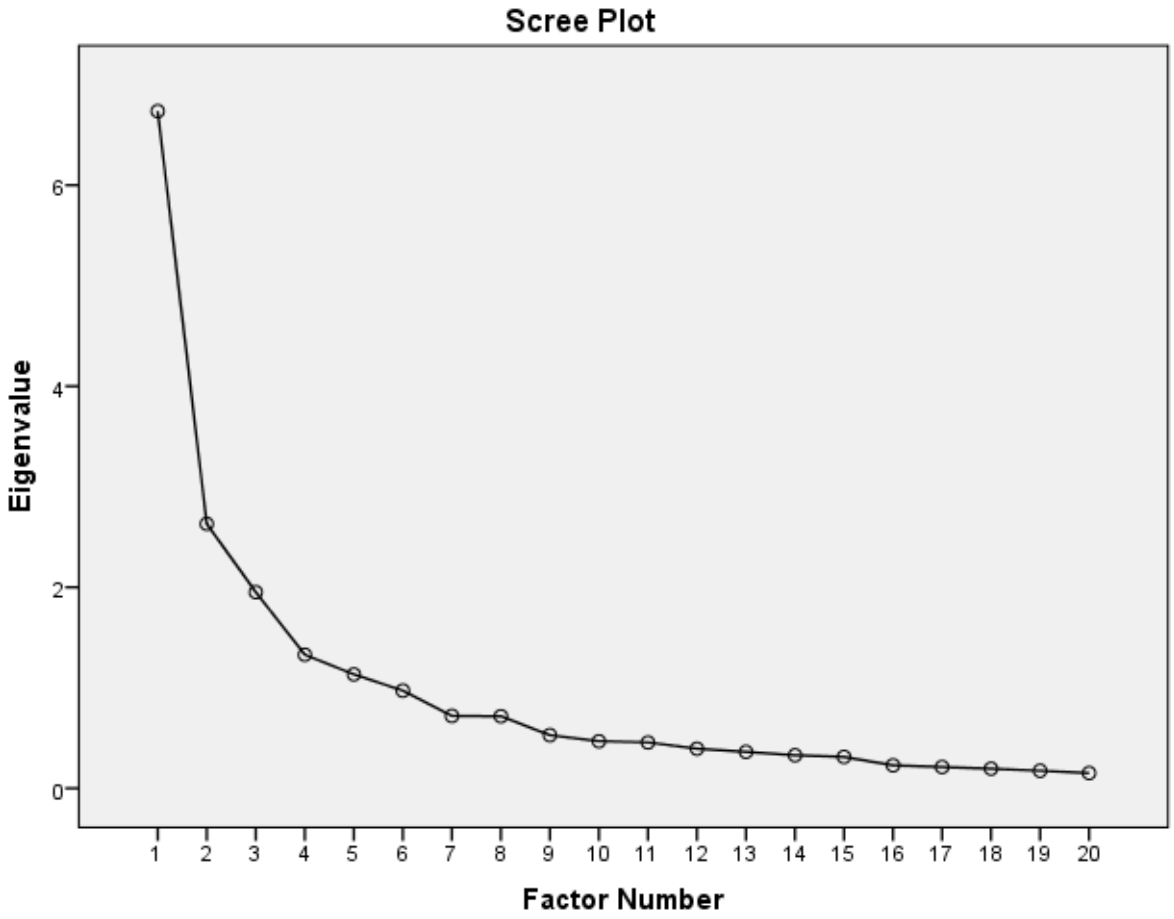

Figure 3: Scree plot of the perceptions factor analysis

Table 1: Population Profile

	%	*n*
Sex		
Male	78	54.5%
Female	65	45.5%
Programme of Study		
B.Sc. in Physical Education	27	18.9%
B.Sc in Biological Science	41	28.7%
B.Tech in Construction Studies and Design & Communication Graphics	42	29.4%
B. Tech in Engineering Technology and Design and Communication Graphics	25	17.5%
B.Sc in Physics and Chemistry	8	5.6%
Age		
<18	4	2.8%
18-20	118	82.5%
21-23	6	4.2%
>23	15	10.5%

Table 2: Pattern and structure (P/S) matrix: motivation constructs

No.	Item	Work with Children P/S	Pragmatic Utility Value P/S	Social & Educational Contribution P/S	Altruistic Service P/S	Ability P/S	Social & Family Influences P/S	Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences P/S	Fallback Career P/S
B37	I like working with children/adolescents	**0.82 / 0.81**	0.09 / 0.05	0.08 / 0.15	-0.03 / -0.24	-0.02 / -0.13	0.07 / 0.04	0.05 / 0.14	0.22 / 0.10
B13	I want a job that involves working with children/ adolescents	**0.81 / 0.83**	0.13 / 0.09	0.04 / 0.12	-0.09 / -0.31	-0.01 / -0.13	0.03 / 0.00	0.01 / 0.14	0.08 / -0.03
B26	I want to work in a child/ adolescent-centred environment	**0.80 / 0.78**	0.14 / 0.12	0.10 / 0.17	-0.09 / -0.29	0.07 / -0.05	-0.06 / -0.09	-0.03 / 0.10	0.19 / 0.09
B7	I've always wanted to be a teacher	**0.65 / 0.67**	-0.05 / -0.07	-0.13 / -0.06	0.11 / -0.10	0.10 / -0.02	-0.13 / -0.07	0.15 / 0.21	-0.38 / -0.45
B12	I like teaching	**0.59 / 0.66**	0.02 / 0.02	-0.10 / -0.04	-0.04 / -0.22	-0.32 / -0.41	-0.03 / -0.02	-0.06 / 0.09	-0.21 / -0.31
B1	I am interested in teaching	**0.52 / 0.61**	-0.11 / -0.09	-0.02 / 0.06	-0.04 / -0.23	-0.28 / -0.38	-0.15 / -0.11	-0.01 / 0.13	-0.33 / -0.42
B38	Teaching will be a secure job	0.26 / 0.22	**0.78 / 0.75**	0.18 / 0.19	0.09 / -0.04	-0.06 / -0.18	0.13 / -0.04	0.02 / 0.18	0.02 / 0.00
B27	Teaching will provide a reliable income	0.09 / 0.06	**0.77 / 0.77**	-0.08 / -0.06	0.01 / -0.06	-0.13 / -0.22	-0.06 / -0.20	-0.10 / 0.08	-0.03 / -0.01
B14	Teaching will offer a steady career path	0.15 / 0.20	**0.75 / 0.76**	0.06 / 0.10	-0.08 / -0.21	-0.21 / -0.35	0.07 / -0.10	0.08 / 0.28	-0.13 / -0.16
B18	As a teacher I will have a short working day	-0.16 / -0.26	**0.62 / 0.64**	-0.06 / -0.08	0.17 / 0.17	0.09 / 0.05	-0.12 / -0.24	0.04 / 0.09	0.09 / 0.16
B22	A teaching qualification is recognised everywhere	0.03 / 0.10	**0.56 / 0.55**	-0.10 / -0.03	-0.39 / -0.43	0.28 / 0.13	-0.02 / -0.13	0.09 / 0.25	-0.25 / -0.25
B4	As a teacher I will have lengthy holidays	-0.25 / -0.27	**0.46 / 0.56**	0.06 / 0.07	0.06 / 0.04	-0.32 / -0.34	-0.24 / -0.38	0.02 / 0.14	0.19 / 0.23
B16	Teaching hours will fit with the responsibilities of having a family	-0.03 / -0.08	**0.40 / 0.51**	-0.21 / -0.16	-0.08 / -0.11	-0.05 / -0.11	-0.23 / -0.36	0.21 / 0.29	0.20 / 0.21

Table 2:
(Continued)

No.	Item	Work with Children P/S	Pragmatic Utility Value P/S	Social & Educational Contribution P/S	Altruistic Service P/S	Ability P/S	Social & Family Influences P/S	Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences P/S	Fallback Career P/S
B48	I chose teaching as a last-resort career	-0.08 / -0.11	0.02 / 0.02	**0.77 / 0.73**	0.25 / 0.20	0.02 / 0.06	-0.06 / -0.10	-0.09 / -0.09	0.16 / 0.19
B49	Teaching will allow me to benefit the socially disadvantaged	0.10 / 0.22	-0.12 / -0.08	**0.69 / 0.75**	-0.31 / -0.41	0.12 / 0.06	-0.12 / -0.18	0.02 / 0.13	0.07 / 0.03
B54	Teaching will allow me to work against social disadvantage	0.15 / 0.26	-0.14 / -0.11	**0.68 / 0.72**	-0.11 / -0.26	0.01 / -0.04	-0.06 / -0.11	0.09 / 0.18	-0.06 / -0.11
B45	A teaching job will allow me to choose where I wish to live	-0.17 / -0.09	0.27 / 0.30	**0.60 / 0.60**	-0.01 / -0.10	-0.03 / -0.09	0.00 / -0.11	0.06 / 0.18	-0.22 / -0.21
B53	Teaching will allow me to have an impact on children/ adolescents	0.21 / 0.38	0.04 / 0.09	**0.54 / 0.62**	-0.33 / -0.50	-0.05 / -0.17	0.07 / -0.04	0.20 / 0.35	-0.06 / -0.15
B20	Teachers make a worthwhile social contribution	-0.05 / 0.16	0.02 / 0.07	0.02 / 0.11	**-0.79 / -0.77**	-0.06 / -0.14	0.06 / -0.02	-0.03 / 0.14	0.00 / -0.06
B6	Teaching allows me to provide a service to society	0.06 / 0.28	-0.01 / 0.06	-0.01 / 0.10	**-0.78 / -0.82**	-0.05 / -0.17	0.00 / -0.08	0.10 / 0.28	-0.01 / -0.09
B9	Teaching will allow me to shape child/adolescent values	-0.07 / 0.14	-0.05 / 0.04	-0.09 / 0.02	**-0.77 / -0.77**	-0.13 / -0.22	-0.15 / -0.21	0.01 / 0.20	-0.03 / -0.09
B23	Teaching will allow me to influence the next generation	0.01 / 0.21	0.05 / 0.13	0.00 / 0.10	**-0.65 / -0.70**	-0.14 / -0.24	-0.11 / -0.18	-0.02 / 0.19	-0.16 / -0.21
B31	Teaching enables me to 'give back' to society	0.19 / 0.35	-0.02 / 0.01	0.15 / 0.26	**-0.63 / -0.70**	0.31 / 0.18	0.04 / -0.04	0.22 / 0.33	0.02 / -0.06
B36	Teaching will allow me to raise the ambitions of underprivileged youth	0.21 / 0.35	-0.18 / -0.16	0.21 / 0.27	**-0.54 / -0.58**	-0.12 / -0.16	0.09 / 0.05	-0.06 / 0.06	0.24 / 0.14
B5	I have the qualities of a good teacher	0.03 / 0.15	0.09 / 0.19	-0.08 / -0.03	-0.21 / -0.29	**-0.72 / -0.75**	-0.03 / -0.11	0.00 / 0.17	0.06 / -0.01

Table 2: (Continued)

No.	Item	Work with Children P/S	Pragmatic Utility Value P/S	Social & Educational Contribution P/S	Altruistic Service P/S	Ability P/S	Social & Family Influences P/S	Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences P/S	Fallback Career P/S
B19	I have good teaching skills	0.09 / 0.20	0.10 / 0.19	-0.10 / -0.05	-0.19 / -0.28	**-0.68 / -0.72**	0.00 / -0.08	0.00 / 0.17	0.09 / 0.01
B43	Teaching is a career suited to my abilities	0.07 / 0.19	0.03 / 0.16	0.31 / 0.35	0.09 / -0.10	**-0.67 / -0.72**	-0.03 / -0.13	0.25 / 0.39	-0.03 / -0.11
B3	My friends think I should become a teacher	0.06 / 0.06	-0.18 / -0.02	0.06 / 0.14	-0.07 / -0.13	-0.02 / -0.05	**-0.86 / -0.81**	-0.14 / -0.01	-0.04 / 0.01
B24	My family think I should become a teacher	0.10 / 0.06	0.14 / 0.27	-0.01 / 0.06	0.03 / -0.07	0.10 / 0.02	**-0.75 / -0.76**	-0.02 / 0.12	-0.07 / -0.01
B40	People I've worked with think I should become a teacher	0.00 / 0.03	0.03 / 0.18	0.39 / 0.44	0.12 / -0.03	-0.12 / -0.19	**-0.69 / -0.72**	0.02 / 0.18	-0.19 / -0.15
B2	Part-time teaching could allow more family time	-0.09 / -0.07	-0.06 / 0.13	-0.08 / 0.00	-0.14 / -0.19	-0.04 / -0.10	**-0.64 / -0.68**	0.21 / 0.30	0.16 / 0.19
B29	School holidays will fit in with family commitments	0.02 / -0.06	0.22 / 0.35	-0.11 / -0.06	0.02 / -0.03	0.02 / -0.03	**-0.45 / -0.55**	0.21 / 0.27	0.43 / 0.46
B17	I have had inspirational teachers	0.02 / 0.11	-0.03 / 0.12	-0.04 / 0.04	0.07 / -0.13	-0.01 / -0.15	0.05 / -0.08	**0.94 / 0.91**	0.00 / -0.08
B30	I have had good teachers as role-models	0.02 / 0.13	-0.07 / 0.10	-0.02 / 0.08	-0.08 / -0.26	0.09 / -0.06	-0.04 / -0.17	**0.91 / 0.90**	0.07 / -0.01
B39	I have had positive learning experiences	-0.10 / 0.04	0.06 / 0.22	0.27 / 0.33	0.03 / -0.16	-0.32 / -0.43	-0.02 / -0.16	**0.63 / 0.71**	-0.10 / -0.16
B11	I was unsure of what career I wanted	-0.37 / -0.45	0.25 / 0.27	0.10 / 0.07	-0.12 / 0.02	0.07 / 0.14	-0.06 / -0.15	-0.13 / -0.14	**0.53 / 0.59**
B35	I was not accepted into my first-choice career	0.07 / -0.07	-0.05 / -0.10	0.15 / 0.12	0.08 / 0.15	0.38 / 0.44	-0.13 / -0.10	-0.19 / -0.27	**0.45 / 0.50**
B8	Teaching will be a useful job for me to have when travelling	-0.09 / -0.01	0.16 / 0.16	0.09 / 0.12	-0.15 / -0.18	0.10 / 0.04	-0.08 / -0.10	0.01 / 0.10	**-0.43 / -0.41**

Table 3: Pattern and structure matrix: perceptions about teaching constructs

No.	Item	Social Status P/S	Salary P/S	Social Dissuasion P/S	Satisfaction with Choice P/S	Task Demand P/S
C8	Do you think teachers feel valued by society?	**0.88 / 0.87**	-0.02 / 0.16	0.05 / 0.14	0.02 / 0.39	-0.06 / 0.26
C9	Do you think teaching requires high levels of expert knowledge?	**0.86 / 0.86**	0.01 / 0.18	-0.05 / 0.05	0.02 / 0.38	-0.04 / 0.27
C13	Do you think teachers need high levels of technical knowledge?	**0.82 / 0.84**	0.17 / 0.32	0.02 / 0.11	-0.07 / 0.32	0.04 / 0.28
C12	Do you think teachers feel their occupation has high social status?	**0.79 / 0.82**	0.08 / 0.23	-0.04 / 0.06	0.04 / 0.39	0.01 / 0.28
C4	Do you believe teachers are percieved as professionals?	**0.72 / 0.75**	-0.05 / 0.07	-0.01 / 0.08	-0.01 / 0.35	0.11 / 0.37
C3	Do you think teachers earn a good salary?	0.15 / 0.34	**0.88 / 0.91**	0.04 / 0.09	0.02 / 0.14	0.02 / -0.01
C1	Do you think teaching is well paid?	0.08 / 0.27	**0.87 / 0.90**	0.03 / 0.08	0.12 / 0.16	-0.09 / -0.10
D6	Did others influence you to consider careers other than teaching?	0.01 / 0.08	0.00 / 0.03	**0.89 / 0.88**	-0.08 / 0.09	0.02 / 0.05
D4	Did others tell you teaching was not a good career choice?	0.04 / 0.05	-0.14 / -0.08	**0.80 / 0.80**	0.05 / 0.12	-0.22 / -0.11
D2	Were you encouraged to pursue careers other than teaching?	-0.08 / 0.10	0.20 / 0.20	**0.70 / 0.72**	0.01 / 0.17	0.15 / 0.16
D1	How carefully have you thought about becoming a teacher?	0.06 / 0.37	-0.07 / -0.02	-0.03 / 0.12	**0.85 / 0.82**	-0.12 / 0.22
D5	How happy are you with your decision to become a teacher?	-0.04 / 0.40	0.04 / 0.05	0.07 / 0.22	**0.84 / 0.89**	0.15 / 0.46
D3	How satisfied are you with your choice of becoming a teacher?	-0.02 / 0.41	0.21 / 0.23	-0.04 / 0.11	**0.83 / 0.85**	0.08 / 0.37
C2	Do you think teachers have a heavy workload?	-0.12 / 0.14	0.06 / -0.06	-0.07 / -0.04	-0.10 / 0.17	**0.87 / 0.78**
C11	Do you believe teaching is a well-respected career?	0.03 / 0.34	0.01 / -0.06	-0.05 / 0.02	0.10 / 0.40	**0.76 / 0.81**
C7	Do you believe teaching is percieved as a high-status occupation?	0.20 / 0.46	0.07 / 0.03	0.05 / 0.12	0.00 / 0.37	**0.72 / 0.78**
C15	Do you think teachers need highly specialised knowledge?	0.12 / 0.36	-0.26 / -0.29	0.05 / 0.13	0.15 / 0.44	**0.63 / 0.76**
C10	Do you think teaching requires high levels of expert knowledge?	0.11 / 0.41	-0.14 / -0.16	0.12 / 0.22	0.29 / 0.56	**0.55 / 0.72**
C14	Do you think teachers need high levels of technical knowledge?	0.24 / 0.44	-0.21 / -0.20	0.09 / 0.16	0.14 / 0.44	**0.49 / 0.65**

Table 4: Items, reliabilities, means and standard deviation for the constructs in this study

	Factor	*N*	α	*M*	*SD*
Motivation Constructs	Work with Children	6	0.83	5.41	1.35
	Pragmatic Utility Value	7	0.79	4.87	1.63
	Social & Educational Contribution	5	0.77	3.87	1.75
	Altruistic Service	6	0.83	5.04	1.47
	Ability	3	0.74	5.51	1.21
	Social & Family Influences	5	0.77	4.06	1.78
	Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences	3	0.84	5.57	1.64
	Fallback Career	3	0.78	3.29	1.79
Perception Constructs	Social Status	5	0.89	5.12	1.49
	Salary	2	0.88	4.06	1.51
	Social Dissuasion	3	0.72	4.44	2.04
	Satisfaction with choice	3	0.83	5.88	1.44
	Task Demand	6	0.87	5.63	1.39

Table 5: Between-subscale correlation matrix

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Motivational Constructs													
1. Work with Children	1	-.053	.086	-.252**	-.139	.032	.115	-.136	.135	.047	-.142	.384**	.152
2. Pragmatic Utility Value		1	.018	-.064	-.133	-.192*	.181*	.037	.235**	.272**	-.067	-.069	.008
3. Social & Educational Contribution			1	-.124	-.024	-.088	.094	-.023	.106	.240**	.372**	.179*	.047
4. Altruistic Service				1	.119	.087	-.217**	.079	.033	.073	.112	-.063	-.184*
5. Ability					1	.093	-.170*	.082	-.224**	-.063	-.040	-.384**	-.345**
6. Social & Family Influences						1	-.154	-.072	.089	-.184*	.007	.127	.117
7. Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences							1	-.086	.213*	.176*	.213*	.233**	.254**
8. Fallback Career								1	-.309**	-.038	.048	-.544**	-.138
Perception Constructs													
9. Social Status									1	.191*	.112	.441**	.347**
10. Salary										1	.035	.040	-.097
11. Social Dissuasion											1	.173*	.065
12. Satisfaction with choice												1	.381**
13. Task Demand													1

Note: *$p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

	B	*SE B*	β	R^2
Step 1				
Constant	.00	.08		
Work with Children	.38	.08	.38**	
				.15
Step 2				
Constant	.00	.07		
Work with Children	.34	.07	.34**	
Ability	-.34	.07	-.34***	
				.26
Step 3				
Constant	.00	.06		
Work with Children	.28	.06	.28**	
Ability	-.31	.06	-.31***	
Fallback Career	-.48	.06	-.48***	
				.49

Note: *p < .05; ** p < .01